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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/686,380

10/15/2003

Theresa Ditter

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02/22/2011

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EXAMINER

BLATT, ERIC D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3734

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

02/22/2011

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/686,380	Applicant(s) DITTER, THERESA	
	Examiner Eric Blatt	Art Unit 3734	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 December 2010.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 31-37 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 and 38-41 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-30 and 38-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kensey et al. (US 5,545,178) in view of Wahr et al. (US 2002/0183787) and Buckman et al. (US 2003/0176890).

Kensey discloses a tissue puncture closure device (Figures 1-5) comprising a carrier tube 88, a filament 42 attached to an anchor 38, a sealing plug 36 comprising a collagen sponge, and a locking apparatus comprising holding member 40 and knot 62 wherein said locking apparatus is separate from the filament, anchor, and sealing plug and is arranged adjacent the sealing plug for compressing the sealing plug along the filament toward the anchor. Wahr discloses a similar sealing device (Figures 9-11 and 16) wherein a locking element 70 (Figure 16) is provided to urge an anchor 12 and a plug 14 toward one another along a filament 16. Wahr teaches that an alternate locking means may be provided to perform this function wherein the locking means comprises a ratchet mechanism. (Paragraph 72) It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the apparatus of Kensey by providing the ratcheting locking mechanism 70 of Wahr since this was a known alternative to press a

sealing plug against a puncture and its use would not have produced unexpected results.

With regard to the claimed ratchet structure, Wahr states only that the locking element 70 may acts as a ratchet mechanism, but does not provide a drawing showing detailed structure of this system. Buckman discloses a ratchet mechanism that functions similarly to that of Wahr wherein the structure of the mechanism is fully depicted. Buckman discloses a ratchet mechanism comprising a hub 28, an elongated track 18, a plurality of sloping teeth 20, and a shoulder stop for limiting movement of the hub (the flat side of each tooth acts as a shoulder stop preventing the locking hub from traveling backwards), and that the hub 28 comprises a nut having a flexible internal finger 32 wherein said finger comprises a notch or an external corner shaped to mate a surface of the plurality of sloping teeth. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify the apparatus taught by Kensey and Wahr by providing the ratcheting locking mechanism taught by Wahr such that it comprises the structure of the Buckman ratchet mechanism since Wahr fails to detail the structure of the disclosed ratchet mechanism and the Buckman structure would have functioned well for the intended purpose.

With regard to the recitations that the ratchet strap is separate from and attached to the filament, Wahr appears to suggest using the filament itself as a ratchet strap while Buckman discloses only a ratchet strap wherein said strap is not attached to a filament. When modifying the Kensey apparatus to use the ratcheting locking means disclosed in Buckman, one skilled in the art would have a choice between providing a

separate ratchet strap (similar to the strap disclosed in Buckman) along a portion of the filament 42, or alternatively, to integrally form ratchet teeth along the filament 42 itself so as to form a ratchet strap that is integral with the filament 42. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to form the ratchet strap such that it comprises a separate element attached along a portion of the filament since it has been held that wherein two devices are differentiated only in that components of the devices are separable or integral, making those components either separable or integral does not patentably distinguish the devices. *In re Larson*, 340 F.2d 965, 968, 144 USPQ 347, 349 (CCPA 1965), *In re Dulberg*, 289 F.2d 522, 523, 129 USPQ 348, 349 (CCPA 1961) By forming the ratchet track of the modified Kensey apparatus such that it is a separate element disposed along the filament 42, the device will comprise a first member (the ratchet track) that maintains a fixed position relative to the filament, and a second member (the hub) that is movable along the filament relative to and in contact with the first member.

The teeth of the modified device would comprise the claimed first member that maintains a fixed position relative to the filament, and the hub of the modified device would comprise the claimed second member that is movable along the filament relative to the first member.

Regarding claims 38-41, the modified device as set forth above comprises a filament having a ratchet strap along a portion of its length where the locking hub is configured to lock to the strap. The anchor 38 is capable of pivoting relative to the filament. The filament comprises a single strand that extends through the sealing plug,

and a distal end of said filament is attached to the anchor at points 54 and 56.

Regarding the recitation that the first member (the ratchet strap) is molded around the filament, the ratchet strap of the modified device is attached to a portion of the filament.

It would have been obvious to mold these elements together since the attachment means is a matter of design choice. (See Paragraph 25 of Applicant's specification which states that the strap may be molded around the filament or, alternatively, the strap may include a hole through which the suture extends to fasten said elements together. Paragraph 25 continues, explaining that it will be understood by those of skill in the art that other fastening mechanisms between these elements may be used.) With regard to the location of the ratchet track along the filament, it would have been obvious to located the track along the segment of the filament where the holding member 40 is to be attached. This position comprises a location that is spaced between the distal and proximal ends of the filament.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 12-7-2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant notes that none of Kensey, Wahr and Buckman individually disclose a ratchet strap that is separate from and attached to a filament. Examiner acknowledges Applicant's position that each of these references individually fail to meet all claim recitations, but maintains that the combination of references fairly teaches the apparatus as claimed.

Applicant argues that there would be no motivation for one of skill in the art to form ratchet teeth in the filament 42 of Kensey would cause significant structural degradation to the filament. This statement appears to be speculative. Further, it seems plausible that one having ordinary skill in the art could select a filament that is capable of being engineered to have structural features along a portion of its length. Applicant further argues that this modification would hinder the ability of the filament to slide through the sealing plug and the anchor. Again, this argument appears to rely on speculation, and even assuming this assertion was true, it is unclear how this sliding function might be critical to the performance of the device.

Applicant additionally argues that the filament 42 of Kensey comprises two strands, and that in order to attach a ratchet strap such as the one disclosed in Buckman to the filament of Kensey would require one of skill in the art to replace the 'two strands' and the holding member 40 with the ratchet components disclosed in Buckman. Examiner respectfully disagrees with this characterization. First, the Kensey filament comprises a single strand that doubles back at its distal end to connect to the holding member 40. In replacing the connection means between the filament and the holding member with a ratchet mechanism as taught by Wahr and Buckman, there would be no need for the filament to double back. Additionally, the rejection as set forth above does not rely on replacing the filament with a ratchet track. Instead, a ratchet track such as that disclosed in Buckman would be provided along a portion of the length of the filament. Applicant has failed to provide any arguments against this modification.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric Blatt whose telephone number is 571-272-9735. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gary Jackson can be reached on 571-272-4697. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3734

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/E. B./

Examiner, Art Unit 3734

/Gary Jackson/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3734

February 19, 2011